

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) A telecommunications network including a network based telephone answering system to which calls for a particular network destination may be diverted, said destination being identified by a single telephone number used by a plurality of called customers, the network including control means programmable by customer action at the network destination to select conditions under which some or all calls for the destination are diverted, the telephone answering system further including:

means selectively to store respective messages and to associate such messages with a particular one of said plurality of customers of the destination in response to predetermined characteristics for an incoming call which identify the calling customer, and

means to selectively play messages for a particular one of said plurality of customers only on receipt of signals identifying said particular one of said plurality of customers.

2. (canceled)

3. (currently amended) A telecommunications network including a network based telephone answering system to which calls for a particular network destination may be diverted, said destination being identified by a single telephone number used by a plurality of called customers, the network including control means programmable by customer action at the network destination to select conditions under which some or all calls for the destination are diverted, the telephone answering system further including:

means selectively to store respective messages and to associate such messages with a particular one of said plurality of customers of the destination in response to predetermined characteristics for an incoming call, and

means to selectively play messages for a particular one of said plurality of customers only on receipt of signals identifying said particular one of said plurality of customers;

~~A telecommunications network as in claim 1,~~ in which the telephone answering system is responsive to network signals identifying the calling party to associate a message received during the same call with a particular one of the plurality of customers.

4. (currently amended) A telecommunications network including a network based telephone answering system to which calls for a particular network destination may be diverted, said destination being identified by a single telephone number used by a plurality of called customers, the network including control means programmable by customer action at the network destination to select conditions under which some or all calls for the destination are diverted, the telephone answering system further including:

means selectively to store respective messages and to associate such messages with a particular one of said plurality of customers of the destination in response to predetermined characteristics for an incoming call, and

means to selectively play messages for a particular one of said plurality of customers only on receipt of signals identifying said particular one of said plurality of customers;

~~A telecommunications network as in claim 1,~~ in which calls are selectively diverted to the telephone answering system or are connected to the network destination in dependence upon the network signals identifying the calling party line.

5.-7. (canceled)

8. (previously amended) A telecommunications network as in claim 1, in which the telephone answering system is responsive to signalling identifying a particular one of the plurality of customers using said particular network destination to play back respective messages stored for that customer.

9. (previously amended) A telecommunications network as in claim 8, in which, subsequent to delivery of messages for the particular customer, messages not associated with any particular customer or associated with all of the plurality of customers using said particular network destination are played to the calling customer.

10. (previously amended) A telecommunications network as in claim 8, in which, subsequent to playing messages for the identified one of the plurality of customers using said particular network destination, the system causes a voice announcement indicative of the presence or absence of messages for other customers at the same network destination.

11. (currently amended) A method of operating a telecommunications network based telephone answering system to which calls for a particular network destination may be diverted, said destination being identified by a single telephone number used by a plurality of called customers, the network being programmable by customer action at the network destination to select conditions under which some or all calls for the destination are diverted, the method comprising:

selectively storing respective messages and associating such messages with a particular one of said plurality of customers of the destination in response to predetermined characteristics for an incoming call which identify the calling customer, and

selectively playing messages for a particular one of said plurality of customers only on receipt of signals identifying said particular one of said plurality of customers.

12. (canceled)

13. (currently amended) A method of operating a telecommunications network based telephone answering system to which calls for a particular network destination may be diverted, said destination being identified by a single telephone number used by a plurality of called customers, the network being programmable by customer action at the network destination to select conditions under which some or all calls for the destination are diverted, the method comprising:

selectively storing respective messages and associating such messages with a particular one of said plurality of customers of the destination in response to predetermined characteristics for an incoming call, and

selectively playing messages for a particular one of said plurality of customers only on receipt of signals identifying said particular one of said plurality of customers;

~~A method as in claim 11,~~ in which the telephone answering system is responsive to network signals identifying the calling party to associate a message received during the same call with a particular one of the plurality of customers.

14. (currently amended) A method of operating a telecommunications network based telephone answering system to which calls for a particular network destination may be diverted, said destination being identified by a single telephone number used by a plurality of called customers, the network being programmable by customer action at the network destination to select conditions under which some or all calls for the destination are diverted, the method comprising:

selectively storing respective messages and associating such messages with a particular one of said plurality of customers of the destination in response to predetermined characteristics for an incoming call, and

selectively playing messages for a particular one of said plurality of customers only on receipt of signals identifying said particular one of said plurality of customers;

~~A method as in claim 11,~~ in which calls are selectively diverted to the telephone answering system or are connected to the network destination in dependence upon the network signals identifying the calling party line.

15.-17. (canceled)

18. (original) A method as in claim 11, in which the telephone answering system is responsive to signalling identifying a particular one of the plurality of customers using said particular network destination to play back respective messages stored for that customer.

19. (original) A method as in claim 18, in which subsequent, to delivery of messages for the particular customer, messages not associated with any particular customer or

associated with all of the plurality of customers using said particular network destination are played to the calling customer.

20. (original) A method as in claim 18, in which, subsequent to playing messages for the identified one of the plurality of customers using said particular network destination, the system causes a voice announcement indicative of the presence or absence of messages for other customers at the same network destination.